

RIṢABHA DEVA

THE FOUNDER OF JAINISM



C. R. Jam
Bar-at-Law



*Statue of Rishabha Deva in the Musee
Guimet in Paris (France)*

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LORD RIṢABHA DEVA THE FOUNDER OF JAINISM

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FOREWORD



आदि गुरुय आदीश जिन आदि सुविधि कर्तार ।

धर्मधुरन्धर परम गुरु नमूँ आदि अवतार ॥

To the first PERFECT MAN, the Lord of Conquerors, the first most Excellent Arranger of things, the support of Dharma, the Supreme Teacher,

Salutation !

Risabha Deva was the founder of Jainism in the current cycle of time. He was a man, but became Immortal and a Tirthamkara (Teaching God), and taught the Path of Perfection to others. Innumerable souls have benefited by his Teaching. There have been twenty-three subsequent Tirthamkaras who re-affirmed His doctrine. He flourished very very far back in the remoteness of hoary antiquity. His life story will be delineated in the following pages. The account is based on the Jaina scripture entitled the *Adi Puranā* and on certain works on the Jaina Law. The date of Risabha Deva's age is simply unfixable; all that can be said about His time is that it was anterior to all forms of rational religion; for all mythologies, all allegories, of all lands and people that have a rational interpretation, yield only fragments of the Truth taught by him, when properly interpreted, and would be quite unintelligible and misleading with-

out the light of His Word. The Jaina chronology places Him at an almost immeasurable antiquity in the past; but the Hindus, who recognize the Tirthamkara as one of the incarnations of Visnu, hold that no less than twenty-eight *yugas* (cycles) have elapsed since His time. All that can be said definitely about His age, then, is that He flourished very very far back in the hoariest of hoary antiquity, and that He was prior to all systematized forms of religion !

INTRODUCTION

The one towering personality at the birth of pre-historic history of the Aryan race is Rishabha Deva. According to the Hindus he flourished 28 great *yugas* (millions' of years) ago. His son was Bharat, the first great Emperor, after whom India came to be known as Bharatavarsha.

Rishabha Deva was son of Nabhi Rai, his mother was Maru Devi. From his birth he was marked with all the most auspicious of signs. He learnt all wisdom untaught. Today we would call such a man a genius; but Rishabha Deva rose higher; he became what is known as a Tirthamkara. He has been counted amongst the incarnations of one of their chief gods by the Hindus. Actually he was the founder of Jainism.

The world has been grossly mistaken about the age of Jainism. Early hasty enquiries hurriedly jumped to the conclusion that it originated as a branch of Buddhism. This error was dispelled by further research. Today from the excavated seals and images it is certain that Jainism was flourishing at the date of the Mohenjo-Daro Civilization, over 5,000 year ago. But the last word should certainly go to the Hindus who have never disputed the fact that Rishabha Deva was the original founder of Jainism, and that its antiquity is immense and to be measured in millions.

The Brahmanda Purana ब्रह्माण्ड पुराण of the Hindus

calls Rishabha Deva the ANCESTOR OF THE KSHATRIYA CLAN:—

The English translation of the text is as follows:—

"I shall relate the family of Nabhi, know that he flourished in the country called Hima; he begot on Maru Devi, Rishabha Deva of bright radiance who was the best of kings, "and the ancestor of the kshatriya clan. To Rishabha was born Bharat,...Prompted by the spirit of world flight, Rishabha Deva gave Hima, which is in the south, to his son Bharat.

In the Kurma Purana कूर्मपुराण of the Hindus it is said:

"In the land called Hima, Rishabha of great brilliance was born to the great Nabhi from Maru Devi. To Rishabha was born Bharat, who was a great Hero."

From an account in the Markandey Purana मारकण्डेय पुराण (of the Hindus) we learn some further particulars of Rishabha Deva's history.

'Rishabha's son was Bharat and Rishabha performed the installation ceremony of Bharat and entered *sannyasa* (sainthood); and, abiding in *vanaprastha* stage, the fortunate one, performed austerities. The country of Hima, which is to the south, was given to Bharat by his father, and came therefore to be known as Bharatavarsha, after his name. Bharat had a virtuous son by name Sumati."

According to the Kurma Purana the body of Rishabha Deva had become very feeble from austerities. He was naked, and reduced to a skeleton, according to the Vishnu Puran. Further confirmtaion of the story is to be found in the Agneya अग्नेय and the Bhagwat Purana.

The Prabhasa प्रभास Purana tells us:—

To the pure and beautiful Kailash Mountain this Rishbha, the Jineshwara, the all-knowing, the all-penetrating the auspicious, proceeded!"

कैलासे दिमले रम्ये वृषभोऽयं जिनेश्वरः ।

अकार स्वायधारं च सर्वज्ञः सर्वगः शिवः ।

All these authorities do refer clearly to the great Rishabha by name. In the Atharva Veda, however, there is a reference to a great Vratya, who would, again appear to be Rishabha Deva. The text runs:

"For a whole year he stood erect. The gods said unto him, why standest thou, Vratya? He answered and said: Let them bring my couch. They brought the couch for that Vratya...The Vratya ascended the couch. The hosts of gods were his attendants, solemn vows his messengers and all creatures his worshippers!"

The Vratyas at that distant time in the past should only be the Jains and the account is so very much like that of Rishabha Deva's life that there can be little doubt about its referring to him, though the name is not mentioned in the Veda. Rishaba Deva is, however, actually referred to by name in the oldest of the Vedas.

Rishabha Deva is said to have been all-knowing in the Hindu Puranas. The Jains also say the same of him. The Buddhist scholar, Dharma Kirti, too refers to him as in his "Nyaya-vindu" an Omniscient Being.'

यः सर्वज्ञ आत्तो वा सज्योतिर्ज्ञानादिकमुपदिष्टवान् ।

यद्यथा । ऋषभ वर्धमानादिरिति ॥

This Rishabha Deva was the founder of Jainism, which is still flourishing in different parts of India. The teaching of Jainism is centered round the Soul-nature. It aims at the attainment of the highest excellence for the soul. Its motto is *ahimsa*, that is universal love, which it describes as the key to success. Excellent forgiveness, excellent meekness, excellent veracity, excellent uprightness, are amongst the virtues the Jainas are required to cultivate. Renunciation is encouraged, but not so as to leave the matters of the life of this world in neglect. Both the here and the hereafter must be taken care of, though the hereafter is the more important of the two, from the point of view of the individual soul. From the Society's standpoint the here is equally important; for once it is allowed to be encroached upon by hostile external or internal elements its stability and integrity are sure to be lost; and without social stability how shall the individual be able to practise the *dharma* that is to take the soul to the Land of Abiding Blessedness and Bliss? Gradually the individual should train himself for retirement from the life of worldly activity; but this is only the general rule, and may be transgressed with perfect impunity by any one fired with greater ardour and enthusiasm.

Such was the teaching of the Great Pre-historic Teaching Rishabha Deva. Since his time, twenty three other Great Teachers have arisen amongst the Aryans, who have taught the same Doctrine to humanity. The last of these two Great ones flourished within historical times. Parsva Nath was the twenty

third, who lived about 2800 years ago; and Mahavira was the last whose *nirwana* took place something like 2460 years ago.

CHAPTER I

GLIMPSES ALONG LIFE'S JOURNEY. SOME PREVIOUS INCARNATION.

1. *Jaya Varma*

Long, incalculably long, long, ago, Śrī Sen was the king of Indrapuri, in the country of Gandhīlā. His queen was Sundari, who was really very beautiful, as the name implied. From her Śrī Sen had two sons, Jaya Varmā and Śrī Varmā who was the younger. The parents were very fond of their younger son, and appointed him their successor. Any other prince in place of Jaya Varmā would have resented this unkindly act, and revolted against the parental authority. But Jaya Varmā was a different being. He did not cherish resentment or disaffection towards the authors of his being, and did not seek to oust his younger brother from the throne. The incident merely filled him with renunciation, he was seized with the spirit of world-flight, and sought refuge at the feet of a Jaina Saint. He was duly admitted in the order, and earned much merit as a *yogi* (ascetic), by practising the twelve kinds of asceticism, internal and external. One day he was bitten by a serpent and died of the venom. Jaya Varmā did not attempt to kill the vermin, and cherished no resentment in his heart. He reincarnated as a son to Atibala king of Alkāpuri, from his queen Manoharā.

2. Mahabala

Alkāpuri is situated on a hill in one of the distant Provinces of the Jambu Dvīpa. Sahasrabala was at one time the king of this place. When he became old he took to *sannyāsa* (asceticism), to look after his spiritual well-being. His son Śatabala succeeded him, and, after a long and prosperous reign, followed in the footsteps of his father, and renounced the world. Atibala, his son, then became the king of Alkāpuri. He married the fair princess Manoharā. The soul of Jaya Varmā took birth as a son to Atibala and Manoharā, as stated above. They called him Mahābala.

As the fruit of his previous life's asceticism, Mahābala was endowed with many great virtues and was surrounded by all kinds of splendours and the good things of the world. For a long time he enjoyed life and was much respected by all.

Mahābala was not only a great king; he was also a great thinker. He had four ministers who favoured four different creeds. These were: Mahāmatī, who was a materialist, Sambhinnamati, who held that things were unreal, being really only so many 'ideas'; Śātamati, who maintained the doctrine of voidness; and Svayambuddha, who was a Jaina. The family religion of the king, too, was Jainism; but Svayambuddha felt much anxiety about him, and wanted to turn his thoughts definitely towards *dharma* (religion), so that the possession of wealth might not stand in the way of the future prosperity of his soul.

One day the king saw two terrible dreams and was much affected by them. Svayambuddha then

found it easy to impress him with the need for turning to religion to take care of his soul.

The king thereupon determined from that very moment to embark on the voyage of the soul's prosperity along the path of *sannyāsa*. He gave away costly gifts to the deserving, made arrangements for the care of his kingdom, and prepared for the noble *sallekhanā*, the end that is sought by all the truly great.

3. Lalitanga

Jainism shows heavens (as also hells) to be but separate regions of the universe. The one is no more a pleasure garden kept by a supreme king-like god, than the other is a prison-Siberia of a divine caesar or czar. Conditions of existence are very very pleasant in the heavens; but the hells are constituted by those regions which are the reverse of heavens.

The residents of heavens possess the outer bodies of a type that is bright and resplendent, and that readily obeys the impulses of the owner's will. It can become big or small, light or heavy, at will; it can pass through space at a rate of speed that will put the motion of light to shame. All the residents of heavens are endowed with clairvoyance from birth. All this is due simply to the fact that the material of their bodies is not gross like ours; it is ethereal.

Mahābala understood full well the importance of the time that was still left to him for the shaping

of his destiny for the future well-being of his soul. He devoted the whole of that period to the eradication of his lower nature, the subduing of his passions and emotional propensities, and the suppression of private loves and hatreds. He worked under the guidance of Svayambuddha all the time. Holy meditation, adoration of the Great Tirthamkaras, of the Liberated Ones, of Saints and Preceptors and the ordinary Sadhus (ascetics), collectively termed *Paucha-Parameshthi*, recitation of the great obeisance *mantram* and the cultivation of the spirit of detachment from the physical body occupied his time, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. He began by giving up solid food at once; gradually other kinds of diet were also abandoned. Thereafter his sustenance consisted only of the ambrosia of *dharma* (the teaching of Truth)! He cultivated to perfection, the spirit of mercy and compassion for all, especially for those who were unable to take care of themselves. He would not touch anything of worldly goods now. He would hurt no one. Even written scripture he would handle extremely carefully to see that by his carelessness he should not cause hurt or harm to some tiny specimen of life that might be hiding under it. He practised the ten noble virtues, forgiveness, meekness, straight-forwardness and the like that are the characteristics of the true *dharma*. He also practised self-control with regard to the activities of his body, mind and speech. In this way excellence after excellence was attained by him in the course of a month. Internal peace, strength of character

soul-force came to him, as if in exchange for worldly greatness and kingly pomp. His mind was at rest; he understood the nature of things, and acquired unruffled mental calm in consequence of the understanding.

Thus, the end of the month found him a well-wisher of all, a hater of none ! It also found him firmly established in the spirit of renunciation and filled with *sānti* (tranquillity) that nothing could disturb.

On the accomplishment of the *sallekhanā* death Mahabala was born in the region of the *Devas* (celestials). He now came to be called Lalitanga.

He remembered his past life, and recalling that his good fortune was due to the effect of the practising of *dharma*, he went to worship the Tirthamkaras in the Temples of the *devaloka* (heavens). Thence he returned and settled down to the *deva*-life which is like one continuous feast of pleasure.

There is nothing of labour or industry known in the abodes of *devas*. They do not have to sweat for their livelihood.

Fun and frolic characterise the life of those who find themselves so placed as to have nothing whatsoever to do. There is not even public work to be done in the heavens, as there are no needy folk there. The troubles are only mental—jealousy at the greater brilliance and beauty of another *deva*, and the like. But no one can alleviate such suffering.

In the lower heavens both the sexes are represented; though the *deva*-ladies do not conceive or give birth to children. They form companionate marriages, and spend their time in ease and happiness. The little food that is needed is obtained from certain kinds of trees, that do not need to be grown or looked after.

Mahābala had many companionate wives, in the second heaven. But his favourite *devangna* (queen) was the beautiful Svayam Prabhā, who was passionately devoted to him. She was a very lovely lady. The two were almost always together and found much joy in each other's company. Together they would resort to the celestial pleasures, and roam about, hand in hand over hill and dale, inhaling the beauty of nature, the beauty which the mortal eye has not seen nor the mortal ear heard of. Together, too, they would go to worship the God Arhant Deva (Tirthamkara) in the Celestial Fanes. In this way they spent the incalculably long time of the *deva*-life enjoying each other's company, and linking up unwittingly and automatically, their future destinies !

4. Bajrajangha

In the East Videha of the Jambu Dvīpa, there is a country known as Puskaiāvati. Utpalakhetaka and Pundarikini are two important kingdoms in it. Emperor Bajradanta reigned in the last-named kingdom; his sister's husband, Bajrabāhu, was the king of the other. On the termination of the *deva*-

life Lalitānga was born a son to Bajrabāhu from his queen Basundharā. Bajrabāhu called his son Bajrajangha.

Svayam Prabhā's soul, too, descended from heaven and was born in Puskhlāvātī. She became the daughter of the Emperor Bajrahanta, who called her Śrīmatī.

Śrīmatī was a very beautiful girl. Her face was like the full moon in brightness. Her manners were engaging. She received a good education, and grew up into a very charming young lady the daughter of the greatest king of her times.

In due course of time a marriage was proposed and performed of Śrīmatī and Bajrajangha, with great eclat in Pundarikini; and there were great celebrations.

Lovers from the heavens and reunited lovers again now, Śrīmatī and Bajrajangha were devoted to each other, and spent much of their time together, enjoying the pleasures of life, and also worshipping the Lord Arhant, whom they regarded as the source of their great good luck. Many children were born to Śrīmatī; and they were all wise and healthy children. the husband and wife were both devoted to dharma, and performed many meritorious deeds, including the gift of food to jaina saints.

The end came quite unexpectedly to the lovers. One night the servants in charge of the sleeping apartments forgot to open the ventilators, after lighting the incense in the braziers that used to diffuse frag-

rance throughout the night. The sleeping couple lay fast asleep, locked in each other's embrace. That night's sleep did not have an awakening for them any more on this earth!

5. The Bhogabhumija

Bajrangha and Śrīmātī now appear in what is termed *bhogabhumī*. The term *bhogabhumī* is a compound of *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *bhumī* (land) and signifies the region where, like the heavens, the residents have not to earn their bread by sweating in any sense. The regions where man have to work for their livelihood are termed *karma bhumis* (lands of action). Only those who have performed highly meritorious deeds are born in *bhogabhumis*. The true *bhogabhumis* are, no doubt, heavens alone, where the conditions of life are the most pleasant, and which yield the utmost of satisfaction to the senses. The *bhogabhumis* come after the heavens, and are far superior to our earth, in respect of the pleasures that the people enjoy there.

There is no sense of property or appropriation known in the *bhogabhumis*. Nature is too lavishly abundant for that to be necessary.

Bajrajāṅgha and Śrīmātī were born twins in the *bhogabhumī* known as Uttarakuru. In due course of time they grew up, became husband and wife, and began to enjoy the fruits of the merit acquired by the good deeds of their past life. They enjoyed

long-life, and had no worries or anxieties of any kind to mar their joy.

The *bhogabhumijās* are all reborn in the heavens on the termination of the life in the "land of joys." Śrīmatī's and Bajrangha's Souls, too, at last departed from the material *bhogabhumī* bodies and became embodied in the ethereal vestments of the heavenly regions once more.

6. Śrīdhara Deva

Bajrajangha is now again in one of the higher heavens. He is this time called Śrīdhara.

Śrīmatī has now cast off the female form. She is re-born in the same heaven as Śrīdhara, not as a *devāṅga*, but as a *deva*.

Once more the two loving souls find themselves in surroundings that are obtained only by the most fortunate among men. The lovers of the past three lives now become intimate friends, and find much joy in each other's company. Their lives are spent in the usual manner of *deva*-life. They worship the Lord *Arhant*, and spend their time enjoying the heavenly pleasures.

7. Subidhi

In the East Videha of Jambu Dvīpa, in the province of Susīma, there reigned once upon a time a great king who was named Sudrīṣṭi. His queen was Sundarananda Devī; who was as accomplished as she was beautiful. Śrīdhara's soul was born to Sundarananda Devī, on the termination of his *deva*-life. His parents called him Subidhi. He was a very

bright and handsome child, and soon acquired amazing proficiency in different arts and sciences.

When he grew up he was married to his maternal uncle's daughter whose name was Manoramā.

Manoramā was a very entertaining girl, and soon obtained possession over her lord's heart. A son, Kesava, who was beautiful and brave was born to Subidhi from Manorama. Kesava was really Śrīmatī's soul, who had re-incarnated in the second heaven after the life of a *bhogabhumija*. Past love again attracted him in the same family with his friend. Formerly the dearly beloved wife of Bajrajānga, she now became his son in his present incarnation!

Subidhi was much devoted to his son, and did not take to holy orders even in old age, owing to the love he bore for him. But he practised the Householder's *dharma* fully, and observed all the vows and the *pratimas* (stages of advancement on the householder's path) regularly. At the end of his life he performed the *sallekhanā* with full severity of renunciation, and departed, absorbed in holy meditation and the contemplation of the Self!

8. The Achyutendra

On the termination of the earthly life, Subidhi's soul appeared in the sixteenth heaven, the name of which is Achyuta. He became the lord (Indra) in this heaven, and enjoyed the distinction of being the Achyutendra (Achyuta+Indra). The glory of the Achyutendra is indescribable in words. He is invested with the most wonderful of the *riddhis* (miraculous

faculties and powers), and enjoys unparalled splendour and pomp.

Kesava (Śrīmatī's soul) also became Pratendra (Prati=deputy+Indra) in this very heaven on the termination of his life in Susimā. He had practised austerities after the death of Subidhi, and was rewarded by a birth in the sixteenth heaven. The dignity of a Pratendra which he attained was almost just as high as that of the Indra himself.

9. Emperor Bajranabhi

All greatness is the result of virtue actively practised by the soul, in some form. Most wonderful good luck results from the observance of the rules of piety and virtue when observed in the Right Way. Right Faith in itself is the greatest of boons, and those who acquire it attain to the highest positions in life, are secure against degradation in transmigration, and speedily get rid of the liability to repeated births and deaths, in the course of a few lives! The reason for all this is that the old kind of bonds are not forged by the soul after the acquisition of the true insight or Faith, and the practising of rigid self-denial destroys the existing chains of thralldom in the course of a few lives (re-incarnations.) The re-incarnations, too, that are undergone after the acquisition of the Right Faith, are all very joyous and delightful, and steadily raise up the will-power to defy suffering and mishap, in spite of the pleasures they afford one in the heavens and on earth.

The Achyutendra became the son of King Bajra Sen and Queen Śrikāntā, on the termination of his life in the sixteenth heaven. He was named Bajranābhi. His body was resplendent, and shone like bright gold; he had many auspicious marks on his person, and was unusually intelligent and sagacious.

The Pratendra from the sixteenth heaven, too, was born in the same land. He became Dhanadatta, the son of the great banker Kuberdatta, from his wife Anantamati. Bajranābhi later appointed him the lord chamberlain of his household. Thus did *karma* bring the old friends together once again!

Bajra Sen retired, in the fullness of time, from the concerns of the world, and took to asceticism. Bajranābhi succeeded him, and became a great Emperor. He enjoyed great power and royal pomp for many years, and in the end followed the example of his father, and entered the holy orders.

Bajra Sen had, in the meanwhile, attained to omniscience and *Tirthankara-hood*.

The Status of a *Tirthankara* is the most difficult thing to obtain in the world. It is attained only by four and twenty souls in the course of half a cycle of time comprising innumerable millions of years. The causes that lead to Tirthankarahood are, among others, a burning desire to remove the misery of the world, to carry enlightenment and joy to the hearts of all living beings, perfect faith, profound veneration for the true objects of veneration, namely, the Teacher, the Scripture of Truth and

the Saint, Love, Service, and study (investigation of Truth). The seed of the Supreme Status is generally sown in the presence of a living Tirthamkara Himself. It is His example presumably that fires the mind and stirs up the imagination!

Bajranābhi, too, had his imagination fired by the example of his father who had become a Tirthamkara. He longed to become a Tirthamkara himself, to save all who were involved in suffering and misery in the *samsāra* (transmigration). Henceforth to carry enlightenment and joy to all became his noble mission in life. He had already succeeded in bringing his lower self under his control; but now he redoubled his efforts to attain to perfection in self-abnegation and in impassibility. His life, as a saint, was characterized by watchfulness, study and investigation of Truth, penances and fasts, service of saints, and by rigid self-denial, generally. He loosened his evil *karmas* considerably, and acquired the true scientific insight into the causes of embodiment and suffering, that is, Right Faith.

At the end of his life, Bajranābhi performed the auspicious *sallekhana*, that is coveted by all seekers after emancipation from the clutches of calamity and death. He rose to the reign of the super-heavens.

10. The Ahamindra

When the noble *sallekhanā* culminated in his soul's departure from the body of gross matter, Bajranābhi opened his eyes and found himself in the lovely surroundings of the most coveted

Sarvārthasiddhi. The name literally means 'all desires gratified.' Those who are born in this region are literally without any further ambitions. They have practically reached the end of their journey, and have only one more earth life to go through. They know this fact, and are, consequently, filled with a serenity of mind that is not easily appreciated, except when actually realized. The burden of the soul is much lightened already in their case; the desiring nature has been almost wholly eradicated.

There are no ladies anywhere in the super-heavens; and Sarvārthasiddhi is likewise free from their presence. The *devas* who are born here are rid of sexual cravings, and they pass their time in the enjoyment of peaceful serenity. They are very very long-lived, their term of life being measured, not in years, but, by way of analogy, in oceans of years.

The term *ahamindra* is a compound one, signifying "I am Indra." Each Ahamindra knows and realizes that he is an Indra (Lord) himself, and has no lords above him. They treat one another as absolute equals.

Bajranabhi spent many Oceans of Years in Sarvārthasiddhi in the enjoyment of supreme tranquillity and joy. Svayamprabha's soul was also there in the same super-heaven with him. She, too had become an *ahamindra*.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST WORLD TEACHER

When six months of the long life of the *Ahamindra* remained to him in the super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi, the Indra (ruler) of the first heaven, who always takes the lead in such matters, gave orders to his subordinate *devas* to get ready for the glorification of the coming WORLD TEACHER. Kuber the lord of the celestial treasury then began to rain down choice gems in the Palace of Nābhi Raja at Ajudhya to announce the coming of the Master.

In the Sarvārthasiddhi, Bajranābhi's great Soul perceived that his end was near.

He devoted the rest of his days, as an *ahamindra*, in the holy *dharma-dhivāna* (religious meditation), and the worship of the God of gods, the *Arhant*, in the Temples appertaining to his region. At last at the end of the six months, the ethereal *deva* body was 'dispersed' in all directions, as rapidly as it was formed; the *Ahamindra* was dead! At that same moment the lovely queen of Śrī Nābhi Raja dreamt sixteen wonderful dreams. She saw first of all a white celestial elephant, making deep sounds. She next saw a great white bull of beautiful form. Her third dream consisted in her seeing a white lion with red shoulders. The Goddess Lakshmi was seen next, with two large elephants who were performing her *abhiseka* (bathing) with golden pitchers

Maru Devi next saw two garlands of fragrant flowers, with black bees hovering over them, intoxicated with their fragrance, In the sixth dream she saw the full Moon surrounded by her satellite stars. The seventh dream consisted in the sight of the Rising Sun in the East, destroying the darkness, and rising gloriously in the sky. In the eighth dream she saw two golden vases with a large golden lotus each, on the top. In her ninth dream she saw fishes sporting in a lovely tank, bedecked with different kinds of lotuses. She next saw an effulgent Lake filled with a pale yellow fluid which shone like liquid gold. In the eleventh dream she saw a great Ocean agitated with waves which broke, with gentle sounds, into small spray. She next saw a very big Throne that was set with bright stones. Her thirteenth dream was the sight of a heavenly Palace; the fourteenth, of the Residence of the Nagerdra who is the Lord of the *devas* of the Naga Kumara clan; the fifteenth, a heap of glittering Jewels, and the last a Blazing Fire that burned smokeless and bright! After these she saw one more dream which was the sight of a large beautiful bull, resplendent like gold, entering her open mouth!

It was the morning time when the virtuous Queen of Nābhi Raja saw the above dreams. Soon she woke up, full of joy. She understood her dreams to be the herald of a great joy that was to come into her life. Who was there in all her great kingdom who might be ignorant of the great Event that was

going to take place? She performed her toilet as usual, and with a light step and a wildly-beating heart proceeded towards the king's apartments. She found him seated in the great Assembly Hall. The king received her with affectionate esteem, and she sat down, by his side, on the Throne. She then related her wonderful dreams that augured such good luck. Nābhi Raja was endowed, like all truly pious and advanced Souls, with clairvoyance, and she desired to hear the interpretation of her dreams from his lips. The ministers and others who were present at the time were filled with wonderment and extreme joy.

"Thy first dream, O goddess!" exclaimed Nābhi Raja, "Presages the birth of an excellent Son, the second, that of His Seniority over all others. That He will be strong as a lion, is implied in the third dream. The garlands indicate that thine Son will be the Founder of the True Faith. The significancy of the goddess Lakshmi whose *abhiseka* was being performed by the two elephants is that *devas* will come to perform the *abhiseka* of thy Son. The full Moon foretells the fact that the Boy will be the giver of Joy to the world. That He will be bright like the Sun is to be understood from the next dream. The pair of fishes is indicative of the bliss that thy Son will enjoy, and the fact that He will be further endowed with all the innumerable excellencies, is clear from the dream of the big Lake which thou sawest. The Ocean predicts that He will be the

WORLD TEACHER, and the Lord of Divine Sovereignty. That he is coming from the heavens to be born to thee is the import of the heavenly Palace which thou sawest, and the sight of the Palace of the Nagendra shows that He will be endowed with Clairvoyance from birth. The heap of glittering Jewels signifies that He will be possessed of all Divine attributes, while the smokeless conflagration that thou sawest indicates that He will burn up all the host of *karmas* that hold the soul in bondage and subject one to transmigration. The additional dream that was seen by thee indicates that Śrī Risabha Devaji has been conceived in thine womb!"

Thus did Nābhi Raja who was near to bursting with extreme joy, explain the mystery of the heavenly dreams to his beloved queen. Their companions who heard all this were much astonished. All were filled with gladness and delight.

The announcement of the good tidings was received with acclamation throughout the length and breadth of the royal capital. Men and women gathered round street corners to express their great joy, to congratulate one another, to bless the great Queen!

All of a sudden strains of heavenly music struck the ears of the delighted residents of Nābhi Raja's capital; a great rising hum of voices was heard; the sky itself became darkened with myriads of ethereal forms! It was the *deva* hosts that were coming to celebrate the Great Event. They had come to know of the Descent into Queen Maru Devi's

Womb of the Coming WORLD TEACHER, and had turned out, in haste, to do reverence to the Mother of God !

There were great celebrations in Ajudhya that day. The splendour was such as the residents had never even dreamt of. On the Royal Throne of Gems in the great Hall of Audience were installed the Parents of the Lord, and were worshipped, in all becoming ways, with full devotion. The mortal world had long hankered after Immortality, and their enthusiasm was unbounded at the prospect of the speedy arrival of Him who was going to show them the way to Immortality ! What wonder then that *devas* came down to join men in the celebration of the Great Event ? They, too, are mortals, and feel the approach of death even more poignantly than ourselves, because of their having so much more to lose.

CHAPTER III

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

It was in the last part of the night of the dark half of the second of the month of *Aṣāḍha* that the WORLD TEACHER was conceived by the illustrious Queen of Nābhi Rai. The moon was at the time in the constellation known as the *Uttarāśāḍha*. In the morning the celebrations were held, as we have already seen.

Many celestial maidens came to attend on the Mother of God, of their own accord, at the instance of the Lord of the first Heaven. They assisted Maru Deva in all ways, and kept her cheerful and bright.

There is always something different in a WORLD TEACHER to distinguish Him from the rest of humanity. Risabha Deva's embryonic growth was also marked by many wonderful signs. There were no signs of pregnancy apparent in the body of the Mother; she was cheerful and bright all the time, and her intelligence, already keen and penetrating, grew further with the growth of the Divine Child in her womb. The would-be Mother of the greatest Hero that was to be born, she now discarded the looking glass and began to look at her face in the lustre of a naked sword !

In this way the days of pregnancy (nine months and seven days) were passed. The birth of Risabha Deva was marked with many wonderful signs—the directions were clarified; a wave of peace passed over the entire universe, even the denizens of hells experiencing

its electric thrill for a passing moment; the thrones of the Indras of heavens shook as if by the invisible agitation of a wireless wave !

Again the *devas* joined with men in celebrating the Birth of a God. They assembled in the Royal Palace, filling the earth and the sky, and uttering ceaseless cries of 'Victory.' The *devas* performed an *abhiseka* (ablution) ceremony of the Divine Baby. The Queen of the Heavens decorated the person of the Lord of the three worlds with her own hands. Many heavenly Jewels were put on the person of the Lord. Then overjoyed devotes proceeded to the Palace of Nabhi Raja. Great celebrations followed in the Palace. The *devas* organized private theatricals, and much excellent singing and acting were seen by the mortal man that day. The Indra himself executed a brilliant dance out of sheer joy, to the great delight of all. The lord of a body that instantly obeys all impulses of the will, his dance was a wonder in itself. He changed many forms in the course of his movements, each one more wonderful than the rest, Such joy, such happiness was unheard of in Ajudhya before !

The child Tirthamkara was endowed by birth with clairvoyance and the knowledge of all kinds of arts and sciences. He needed no instructions to acquire wisdom or the knowledge of the three R.s. All the noble virtues had their abode, so to speak, in His being. Excrement—urine, faeces and the like—were not formed in His body; His blood was white, like

milk,* and a delightful fragrance emanated from his person. All the marks of Sainthood and Greatness were present in His person. As for His disposition, from His very childhood He had the fewest desires, and was like a saintly recluse at heart. If it were not the wish of His royal father, He would probably have refused to enter into matrimony. Nābhi Raja had asked Him, saying, "O Lord, Thou really art the Father of the Three Worlds, for Thou art the Preceptor of all living beings; I am Thy father merely like an accompanying cause! Be pleased to recognize the need for the establishment of the marriage sacrament, so that humanity may not misdirect themselves in that regard, and come to grief, through sheer inability to follow the example of great Celibates!" Thus addressed, Risabh Deva gave His consent with silence, accompanied by a very sunny smile, and the monosyllabic 'Om.'

Two accomplished and beautiful ladies the sisters (but according to another version, the daughters) of the brothers Kachha and Mahakachha were soon found for young Risabha Deva, and He was married to them under auspicious constellations.

*The Hindu acknowledgment of the fact is to be found in the challenge of their god Siva, who set up the fact that his own veins contained no fluid blood, but only ashes against the white blood of certain Saints. The justification for Siva's boast is furnished by *tapascharana* (*vairagya* = austerities) which he allegorically represents, inasmuch as it signifies the burning up of all kinds of desires, that is to say in other words, the reducing of everything to ashes!

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY LIFE

Yasasvati was the senior queen of Risabha Deva. She presented him with a son who was very bright and intelligent. Risabha Deva called his name Bharata. Bharata was one of the *ahamindra*-companions of Śri Risabha Deva in the super-heaven Sarvārtha-siddhi. Risabha Deva lived for an enormous number of years. He had many sons from Yasasvati. She also gave birth to a daughter, who was called Brāhmī.

From his other wife, Sunandā, Risabha Deva had one son and one daughter. The son was called Bāhubali. The girl was given the name of Sundari by her worshipful father. Bāhubali was the first Kāmadeva (Apollo) in this age. He was exceedingly handsome, and possessed all the most excellent and charming qualities. In accomplishments he was unrivalled.

As the sons and daughters grew up they were given suitable education by their father, the WORLD TEACHER, who knew all sciences and arts untaught. He wrote out the alphabet for his daughters, and also taught them the figures. The alphabet came to be known as the Brahmi script, after Brāhmī, who was the first to learn it. The daughters of the WORLD TEACHER proved very intelligent, and speedily mastered their lessons. In due course of time they became efficient in all household matters and acquired a knowledge of the various arts and

sciences as well as all the accomplishments that their parents desired them to acquire. Music and singing were naturally included in their attainments. They also understood the Science of Religion well and were so much impressed with the transitory nature of the world, that they resolved not to marry at all. The education of Bharata received the greatest attention from his parents. He was taught other things with his brothers; but he was especially instructed in Law and the Science of the polity of kings by the WORLD-TEACHER. Bharata also displayed a taste for dancing, and became very efficient in the art. Among the younger brothers of Bharata, Vrisabha Sen excelled in music; Anantavirya, in drama; Bāhubali in medicine, archery, floriculture, and the knowledge of precious gems. He was also clever in finding out the characters of men and women from their bodily marks.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC LIFE

Risabha Deva taught men agriculture (cultivation of sugarcane and other crops) and other useful crafts and arts. He laid the foundation of civic life, and taught men how to co-operate with one another for mutual benefit. The country was divided into provinces, these into divisions and districts, and the districts, into towns and villages. Kings and chieftains were appointed to govern and to regulate the routine of civic life.

The occupations and crafts that were taught to the people comprised fighting, letters, cultivation, trades, professions (such as carpentry, goldsmith's work, and the like), and arts such as singing, dancing and painting.

Those who fought came to be known as Kshatriyas, the traders earned the title of Vaiśyas, the rest were at first called *jaghanyaja* (small), later, *avara* (lowest or last), and finally Śudras. At first Vaiśyas were also called by different names, such as *aryya* (gentle) and *vanika* (trader). There were no Brāhmanas then; all were at liberty to pursue literature and none were debarred from education. The Śudras included all those who earned their living by manual labour or handicraft, and who served the Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas. Those who took to wrestling were also counted among the Śudras.

The date on which this arrangement was made was the first of the dark half in the month of *Asadha*, which is the commencement of the *karma-bhumi* (sweating) *srusti* (creation, or order of things).

The people were now happy, and prosperity reigned generally in the land. They were very grateful to the WORLD TEACHER for all that He had done for them, and never wearied of singing His praises.

Some time after this Nāhhi Raja installed Risabha Deva on the throne, and himself retired from the active concerns of kingship. Great celebrations again took place, in which *devas* participated.

It was some time after the installation ceremony that the WORLD TEACHER laid down the foundation of Aryan stability in the form of *varna-vyavasthā* (the rule of the caste). Three *varnas*, not four, were laid down, corresponding to what may be described as the army, the trades and labour (in a comprehensive sense). The system owed its existence to political foresight rather than anything else. It was merely a threefold conscription. A class was set apart for warfare and the maintenance of order, internal and external; another, for carrying on trade; and the third was to prevent disruption for the want of servant attendants, stretcher-bearers, and the men who knew the arts and crafts. In times of war especially have all these three functions of the society to be maintained.

The merit of the *varna-vyavasthā* is great; it enabled the Aryan Culture to rear its proud head over the din and fury of wars and the crash of empires in

non-Aryan lands, throughout the long ages that have rolled by. No country in the whole world can show such long stability of indigenous culture as the Abode of the Aryan race !

The downfall of Aryan Culture within recent historical times is due to the failure on the part of the Kshatriyas to maintain their traditions. They were filled with arrogance, and fell fighting with one another oftener than in defending the mother-land. They lost the disposition that would breed amity and good-fellowship, with the result that they could not generally combine against powerful foreign foes, and were cut up individually. Superstition, due to chronic intellectual degeneration, for which the Brāhmanas are to be blamed whole-heartedly, as professing to be the sole custodians of the spiritual science, led them often to disregard the rules of good generalship and made them look to the dispositions of the stars before marching out against a foe ! Fanatical spirit, too, had its part to play in the downfall of the Aryan Empire. Generals are found constantly disregarding the rules of military strategy and sacrificing away their own and their soldiers' lives in sheer madness of impetuosity. Another cause which played no mean part in the disruption of the Aryan Empire was the failure to benefit by experience. The foreign invaders repeatedly gave evidence of their determination to stick at nothing, that is to say, to make no scruples in obtaining the upperhand; yet were they always treated as if imbued with the spirit of Aryan chivalry and true military honour !

The Hindus hold that they were the founders of the caste-system; but the account they give of it fails to explain the need for its origin, is mythological in its nature—Brāhmanas originating from the mouth of Brahmā, Kshatriyas, from his arms, Vaiśyas from his belly, and the Śudras from his thighs—and ends in making one section of mankind eternally hate another, on the ground of blood-inferiority. The Jainas, on the contrary, recognise the basis of the system to be grounded on occupation, but not on blood, attribute its origin to man, and explain its need to lie in the establishment of stable, if not an ever-lasting, empire!

As for the origin of the Brāhmana caste, it seems to have come into existence later on under Bharata. He one day invited the male residents of his capital to visit him at his palace, and so arranged things that only a small path was left for the people to pass along, unless they chose to go over the extensive grass plots on either side of the way. His object was to find out those who were the most tender hearted among men, and who recognized the presence of a soul even in the lowly blade of grass. Those who would not tread on the grass he called Brāhmanas; because of their knowledge of Brahman (the divinity of life). The WORLD TEACHER condemned Bharata's action in undistinguished language, and probably in the Jaina scheme of things, the Brāhmana class had no place, as an integral part of the caste system, till the time of the author of the *Adi Purāna*, who

seems to have again laid some emphasis on the distinction, to placate the Brahmanical hatred and win them over to protect the Jainas against bitter persecution at the hands of their co-religionists(Hindus)!

The distinction of the touchable and the untouchable among Sudras seems to have grown much later. It could not well have been laid down by the WORLD TEACHER. Imagination is not comforted by the idea of a Divine Law-giver declaring all of a sudden that certain sections of men who had up to that instant been all as much touchable as any of the highest man that could be named, should thenceforth be deemed *pariahs* and social outcasts! What seems most likely to have happened is that after a time, the duration of which cannot be now fixed by any known definite land-marks, those of the Sudras who followed such professions and trades as the sweeper's, the shoe-maker's and the like, fell into filthy habits as a class, and were thenceforth denied social intercourse with the higher *varnas*. Their exclusion was originally based on economic factors rather than on any considerations of blood-inferiority.

Change of *varna* has always been permitted within certain limits which aimed at securing what may be termed appropriate *saṁskaras* (mentality, impressions, impulses), and the change of appearances and surroundings. In Jainism *varna* is to be fixed for a new convert, according to his occupation.

CHAPTER VI

WORLD-FLIGHT AND SANNYASA

Great men cannot remain idle ; they have their work to do, which they have set before them' whether in this life or in the previous one or ones ! When a major portion of the life of the WORLD TEACHER was spent he placed Bharata on the royal seat, and appointed Bahubali the heir-apparent to the Throne. He gave His lands and territory to His other sons and relations, according to their fitness and needs, and gave away much wealth in charity. Having done all this, He took leave from His parents, wives and kinsmen. The assembled *devas* and men then worshipped Him.

Risabha Deva then rose and stepped into a celestial palanquin which the *devas* had brought for the occasion. He was carried into the Siddhartaka forest near Allahabad. The palanquin was placed on a huge transparent stone slab which had been placed there for the occasion, and the LORD stepped out and took His seat on it. It was now the evening time. The Lord sat under a banyan tree, filled with the spirit of *vairāgya* (world-flight) in the sitting *yoga* posture, facing the East. He saluted the Perfect Souls who had reached safety and *nirvana* before Him; and full of cheerfulness and great enthusiasm pulled out, in five handfuls, the hairs of His head

and face. The Lord of the celestials picked up these hairs, and placed them in a jewelled casket. They were subsequently dropped into the distant Ocean, Kshira Sagar.

After pulling out His hairs in the manner described above, Risabha Deva proceeded to remove His clothes and the jewels that He wore. He kept nothing with Him of the Worldly goods, and became a Digambara (destitute of all vestiges of clothes). He discarded not only all external burdens, but also as much of the internal burdens as He could at the time. By birth He was endowed with Clairvoyance in addition to the usual forms of knowledge with which humanity is endowed; and he now acquired what may be called Subtler Mental Perfection (the power to know the innermost thoughts of living and dead personages), in consequence of the great Renunciation.

No less than four thousand chiefs and chieftains followed Him on the Path; but they merely did so either out of the regard they had for Him, or through a fit of passing enthusiasm, without really realizing what they were doing and why.

Knowing the powers of His Great Spirit, that had been developed through many lives in the past, the WORLD TEACHER became immersed in Holy meditation, resolving not to break His fast before the end of six months. He stood in the standing *yoga* posture, immovable like a rock, tranquil and undisturbed all the time !

Humanity in that far distant age all attained to giant stature, and the Lord looked like an immovable Mountain as He stood absorbed in holy meditation.

The four thousand followers of the Lord whose hearts were not illumined with knowledge or faith, soon began to feel uneasy. They tried to restrain themselves as long as they could ; but were unable to stand there doing nothing, and were overpowered by hunger and thirst. They left the place, one after another, and became dispersed in the forest, their fear of the men's ridicule and Bharata's displeasure preventing them from appearing again in the world. Many of them put on aprons and lion-strips made of bark and leaves, and lived in the forest, each following his own fancy for becoming like the WORLD TEACHER.

It would be wrong to suppose that there was no real difference between the *tapascharana* of the WORLD TEACHER and of those who had merely taken to it in imitation of Him. The greatest difference between them lay in regard to the sense of freedom which stirred the WORLD TEACHER, and filled Him with indescribable inward joy. The others had not given up the world of their own accord, and did not experience the Joy of Freedom, but sadness and sorrow at their destitution ! The result was that while the WORLD TEACHER enjoyed inner happiness all the time, His imitators were merely regretting the 'foolish' step they had taken !

In this manner did the WORLD TEACHER continue with His meditation for the space of six

months. He then set out to seek some kind of nourishment. But at that time no one knew what to give to the Divine Saint, and how. The WORLD TEACHER passed through many villages and towns, but no one was able to offer Him food in the way in which it could be accepted. Whenever He went people brought cash, precious stones, water to bathe, and even offered to give Him lands, but He did not want any of these things. Some did bring food to Him also but it was not prepared and offered in the proper way and could not be accepted.

Six months more passed away like this, through which no food or water was taken by the Lord. But it was a mere incident for Him; He was not disturbed by it in the least. Even ordinary saints are expected to remain unaffected by the non-obtainment of food. If death occur for want of nourishment, it will be only an incident, and no more! He who has put his hand to the plough must, on no account, look back. If the saint die under the circumstances, unmoved and unaffected by the want of food, it is a positive gain; if he yield to the impulse of hunger, or die grumbling and cursing his hard luck, it is a 'fall'!

Risabha Deva was absolutely unmindful of the pangs of hunger, and never once bestowed a thought on the subject. He moved about still occupying Himself with Self-contemplation, and paying no heed to the physical needs.

Only once in the morning when people take their breakfast would He visit the habitations of men

and spend the rest of the time in holy meditation. Even in the morning He would merely pass through towns and villages without uttering a word and without asking for food from any one. In this way He reached the city of Hastināpur where lived king Soma Prabha with his younger brother Śreyānsa. The latter had seen during the preceding night, towards the early hours of the morning, several strange dreams. In the morning, when he got up he found himself still thinking of them, and asked for their interpretation from his brother to whom he related them all. "They signify," said the court Pandit who happened to be present at the time and who heard them all, "they signify the arrival of great good luck to your royal house. Some great Soul should come to you this day."

Only a couple of hours after this the WORLD TEACHER entered Hastināpur, and proceeded towards the royal palace. Śreyānsa saw Him coming from a distance, and ran out to do obeisance to Him, accompanied by his brother and others. The sight of the Lord agitated him greatly; there was a rush of some powerful emotion; an internal commotion possessed him for the moment. The next instant Śreyānsa knew himself. He recalled how Bajrajangha had given the gift of food to two holy saints in a forest one day, and how he was there, by the side of Bajrajangha! It was an old affair; several times since he had re-incarnated in different forms; still the memory came back with a rush, vivid and clear at first Svayam Prabhā, then Śrīmati, and now Sreyānsa! All these were but three phases, or complexions,

of one and the same soul ! Who said that the lot of woman in Jainism was hopeless? Śreyansa knew it to be otherwise !

Full of affectionate devotion, Śreyansa now proceeded to offer the refreshing juice of the sugarcane to the WORLD TEACHER, in the approved way, which he now recollected fully. There are many kinds of gifts which people make to one another ; but of all of them the gift of food to a true saint is the most meritorious, and as the Tirthamkara is the greatest of all saints, the giving of food to him with a pure heart that is illumined with the light of *Jnana* (knowledge divine) and filled with reverence and devotion for the Ideal is the most meritorious of all. The *devas* witnessed the sight from the upper air, and rained down fragrant water, heavenly flowers and small gems on the assembly. They uttered loud shouts of "victory ! victory" and beat the heavenly drums!

Kisabha Deva strolled away again into the forests after the partaking of the *ikshu-rasa* (the sugarcane juice). All assembled praised Śreyānsa for his keen intelligence in finding out what was to be done on such an occasion and in succeeding where others had failed. Even Bharata came down from Ajudhya to congratulate him. To them Śreyānsa related his previous history and that of the WORLD TEACHER. They were all filled with wonder, and understood the reality of Life—surely, 'dust thou art to dust returnest, was never said of the soul!'

People now understood the manner in which food

should be offered to a Saint. From this time onward there was no difficulty felt in this regard by men, when offering food to the WORLD TEACHER. The food—whatever it be—should be pure in regard to its materials, pure in regard to its preparation, and pure in regard to the actual giving; it should be free from *himsa* (offence or injury to a moving living being), and should be given with reverence and respect and in a manner which does not imply the recipient's lowering himself in the least degree. For saints will rather starve than take anything when the procuring, the preparing and the giving of it will lower them, in their own estimation, in the least degree, or expose them to ridicule or contempt.

It was the third of the bright half in the month of Baisakh when the WORLD TEACHER broke His fast at Hastināpur. That day the royal kitchen could have fed the whole humanity, because food became inexhaustible miraculously, through the merit of the WORLD TEACHER's presence. The event is still commemorated on the date mentioned, which is known as the *Akhaya* (inexhaustible) *Tija* (third)!

CHAPTER VII

OMNISCIENCE

The fourth *Kalyanaka* in the life of a Tirthamkara is the attainment of Full All-embracing Knowledge, in other words, of Omniscience, by the destruction of the forces that keep it from blazing forth. There are four kinds of *karmas* termed *ghātiyā* (inimical or obstructive) which are responsible for the loss of this great and divine attribute in our case. They are known as knowledge-obstructing, perception-obstructing, serenity-obstructing (i.e., deluding) and power-obstructing energies of *karma*. These inimical forces come into being by the fusion of spirit and matter, which is continually taking place in the case of the unemancipated soul, and are reinforced from moment to moment, so long as it is not characterised by Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Right Faith is acquired only when the energies of fanaticism, and of the worst forms of the four principal passions, namely, of anger, pride, deceit and greed are destroyed. No one who is filled with fanatical spirit, or is agitated by the most malignant form of the passions named, will ever be induced to listen to reason, or to study Religion in the spirit of sobriety and rationality. Therefore, these five kinds of forces have to be destroyed, or subdued, to acquire Right Faith. The seeker has also to rid himself of the tendency to compromise between fiction

and fact (mixed truth and falsehood) and of his superstitions, to be able to take a truly rational view of things. These seven kinds of *karmic* energies gone, he is qualified to acquire the Right Faith. Right Knowledge is really presupposed in Right Faith, since belief (faith) follows knowledge. But it does not arise before the acquisition of Right Faith, inasmuch as it is only knowledge free from error, doubt and ignorance that is termed Right Knowledge, so that before that stage is reached knowledge is merely tantamount to information. It becomes Right Knowledge as soon as the seal of belief is placed on it, eliminating the elements of agnosticism and doubt.

Right Faith and Right Knowledge being acquired, a beginning has to be made in respect of Right Conduct sooner or later, for without action nothing can be accomplished. The forces that stand in the way of progress on the path now are the lesser degrees of passions which are nevertheless still very powerful, and the energies that interfere with perfect serenity of mind. These can only be destroyed by one's turning the back, on, that is, renouncing, the world in the fullest sense of the term. *Tapaścharana* signifies the determination to have absolutely nothing to do with the good things of the world, that is to say, to refuse absolutely to be swayed by its temptations. If death intervene before success is attained, it does not matter a bit. The merit acquired is carried over by the immortal soul, and is so much actual gain, for the future.

Risabha Deva brought much accumulated merit of *tapaścharana* with Him from His previous lives. His Soul's inner forces were developed to such an extent that He possessed the most indomitable will, against which calamity and trouble knocked their heads in vain. He was even able to live without food and water for the whole Period that He remained immersed in holy meditation, and for six months more thereafter when no one knew how to offer Him food properly. Death had itself received a death-blow from His hand ; and starvation could only release Him for ever from the tyranny of the flesh, if it could destroy His body !

Fearless, self-centred, self-controlled, the WORLD TEACHER moved about for a long period of time, engaged in holy meditation. He performed the severest austerities and *tapaścharana*, to eradicate his *karmas* and thereby to separate His Soul from matter. At last His *tapaścharana* bore the desired fruit; on the eleventh of the first, that is to say, the dark, half of the month of Phālaguna in the Uttarāsādhya (sagī taroiass) *Nakshatra* (constellation) the veil of the Temple of Divinity was destroyed completely, and the Effulgence of Knowledge Divine, that is, full, all-embracing OMNISCIENCE, which like lightning, shines in one part but reveals the whole universe, flooded His Consciousness from within! He was then sitting under a banyan tree in the Śakata forest close to the town of Purimatāla.

Omniscience is not acquired as a gift from any one, nor is consciousness like a mirror that needs the

object to stand before it before it can reflect its image. All ideas--the entirety of knowledge--lie buried in the being of the soul, obscured by *karma*, and only need the removal of the obscuring cause to become an actuality of possession. Risabha Deva became omniscient because He destroyed the veil of *karma* that was preventing the fullness of His soul's inherent knowledge from becoming manifest. All souls acquire omniscience prior to entering *nirvana*.

Such an event as the acquisition of omniscience was not likely to remain unobserved. The *devas* perceived it from the specific signs which accompany it in their regions, and flocked to worship the WORLD TEACHER now become really qualified to teach and preach the Truth. Under instructions from the Lord of the first heaven, a heavenly Pavilion (the *Samavasarana*) was erected for the Lord's Preaching, by celestial artisans. The WORLD TEACHER sat in this Pavilion, above a huge golden lotus, placed on a throne of heavenly gems, but so as not to touch it, sitting about a couple of inches above the lotus in the air. Here did the *devas* and men who learnt of the Illumination of the Lord flock together to worship the SOURCE of LIFE and LIGHT.

The following text from the Atharva Veda will be found to possess a great deal of real significance for the student of Comparative Religion; it undoubtedly, refers to Risabha Deva Himself:--

" For a whole year he stood erect. The gods said unto him, Why standest thou, O Vratya? He answered and said, Let them bring my couch. They brought the couch for that Vratya. The

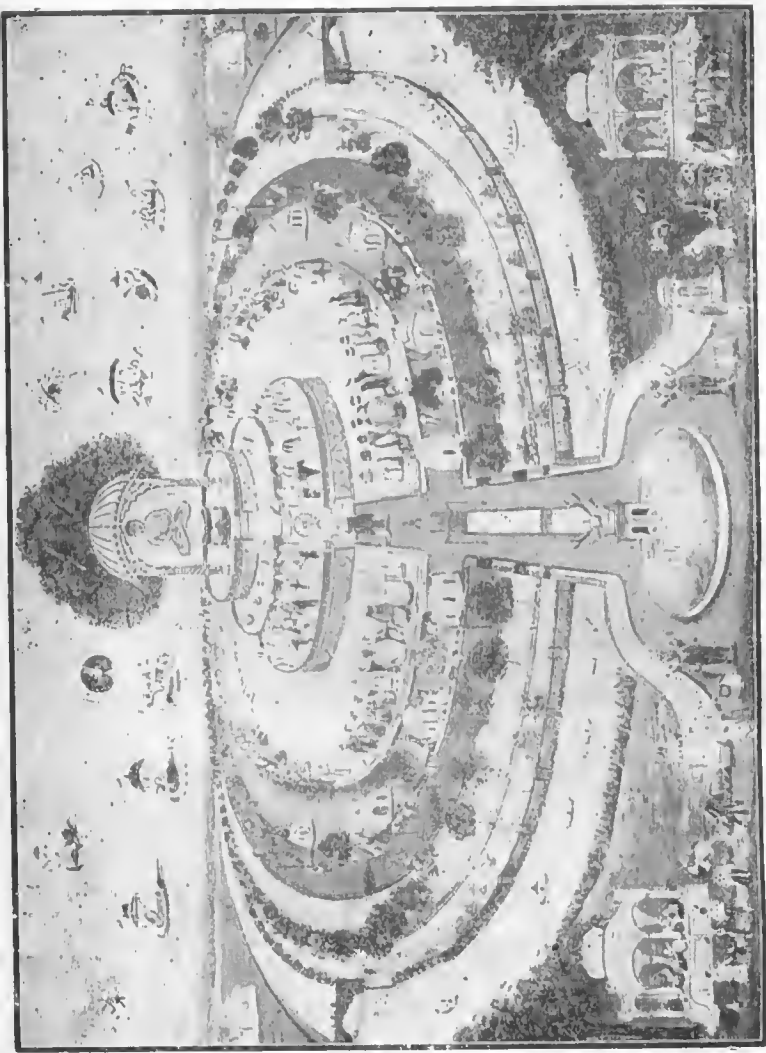
Vratya ascended the couch. The hosts of gods were his attendants, solemn vows his messengers, and all creatures his worshippers....." (Chapter XV).

CHAPTER VIII

THE SAMAVASARANA

Among the wonderful acquisitions of the Tirthamkaras which are obtained as the result of the destruction of the *karmic* energies that stand in the way of the manifestation of the Divinity of the soul, may be mentioned the following: They are able to conquer gravitation and possess the power of levitation; They live without food and water; Their eye-lids are never closed; shadow is not cast by Their bodies; and Their hairs and nails do not grow any more. They are not liable to be assailed by trouble or distress in any form; and 'peace and plenty' prevail wherever they go! Naturally-hostile animals become as friends in Their presence; ferocious natures are tamed! Flowers and fruits appear out of season wherever They go! When seated in the *Samavāsarana* a Tirthamkara appears to be looking in all the four directions, though He only sits facing the East. The speech of the lord is like the roar of many waters, and is distinctly heard by every one present. It is produced independently of volition, that is, without the voluntary movements of the glottis, and is for that reason termed *anakshari* (without letters). The Apostles arrange the teaching of the Truth under twelve main heads (*angas*), and it termed Śruti or *Sruta Jnana*, because of its having been heard (from the TEACHER).

The *devas*, too, contribute their quota to the



The Samavasarana after a Painting in the Jaina Siddhant Bhawan, Arrah.

glory of the Tirthamkara. They clarify the directions for a considerable distance all round, making the ground look like a polished surface, devoid of thorns. They also translate the *anukshari* Speech of the God into different tongues, and place golden lotuses under His feet when He walks, raining flowers and fragrant water all the time ! The cries of "*jaya, jaya*" (victory, victory) are also raised by the *devas*, men joining them in swelling the diapason.

All this, no doubt, reads like a romance, but as stated above the *Tirthamkaras* are not ordinary beings; nor are Their devotees all helpless and powerless like man.

The word *samavasarana* is derived from *sama*, meaning general, that is common, or a dispassionate state, and *avasara*, signifying opportunity, and meant the place where all have a common opportunity of acquiring the Wisdom Divine, or, in the alternative, where souls get the opportunity to attain to dispassion.

The WORLD TEACHER sat in *Padmāsana* (a sitting posture), with His hands placed, one on the top of the other, in his lap, in the attitude of complete relaxation and rest, indicating that He had now nothing more left to sweat for ! He was truly what is termed *krīta-kṛīya* (one who has nothing further left to accomplish) !

Bharata, hearing the good tidings of the attainment by his Divine Father of Self-realization, came to worship Him. With reverence and affection and enthusiasm he offered adoration to the Master, and

sang His praises for a long time. He then took his seat in the Men's Hall, and asked to be enlightened on the Spiritual Science by the WORLD TEACHER, who then began His Discourse.

The Discourse Divine was like a shower of *amrita* (ambrosia), so tranquilizing, so cooling so satisfying was it to all ! The voice of the Lord could be heard distinctly all round, and it was also being rendered into different spoken tongues by the *devas*, in different part of the great Hall.

The Lord's Discourse described the nature of the world in plain terms. It dealt with the nature of the existing substances and their attributes and showed how different properties came into existence when substances got intermingled. Amongst the substances the most important are Spirit and Matter, whose fusion is the cause of all the misery that there exists in the world. The Lord described the true *tattvas* (essentials of knowledge), and gave a detailed description of the entire subject of bondage and release of the souls. The knowledge imparted, constitutes what is known as *Srula Jñāna*, and comprised all the eleven *angas* and the fourteen *purvas* of the Science of Salvation, as Religion may be termed. Every one understood what the WORLD TEACHER said; no one was mystified, no one misled ! Tirthamkaras do not indulge in metaphor and parable, and never resort to allegory to hide the import of a doctrine. Those who were present were filled. Their questions were answered there and then, in the un-*akshari* speech which has

been described above. Every one understood what was said in answering his question. As a matter of fact, the Presence of the Teacher in itself furnished an answer to a good many questions of the assemblage. He was Religion personified in Himself ! He was also the embodiment of Faith, Knowledge and Conduct-of the Way, the Truth and the Life, as some have said ! One had simply to see him to understand what Salvation meant. His Infinite Knowledge was reflected to a certain extent in the Halo of Glory which surrounded Him and which depicted the past seven lives of all living beings ! To see Him was to see God, to hear Him was to be filled with heavenly joy.

The Lord's Discourse, which is gathered up by the Chief Disciples comprises twelve *angas* (departments), and is generally represented by a tree with twelve branches. It is this Tree of Wisdom Divine which is the real friend of the seeker after release from the pain and misery of embodied life.

Immediately after the divine preaching, many men and women determined to follow the Lord on the Path. The foremost among them was Vrisabha Sen one of the younger brothers of the Emperor Bharata. He became the first Apostle of the God. Soma as Prabha and Śreyānsa, at whose Palace the WORLD TEACHER had broken His first fast likewise became two of the Apostels. Brāhmi, the elder daughter of the WORLD TEACHER, become the first female saint. Sundari second daughter of the Lord, also renounced

world, and joined the sisterhood of Nuns one Śrutakīrti became the first Householder, and a pious lady, by name Priyāvarta, became the first lay female follower of the Lord. Another of Bharata's brothers whose name was Anantavīrya, at once became a monk. He was the first to obtain *nirvāṇa* in this half cycle of time. Many others joined the *Saṅgha* (Community of the Pious), all desirous of attaining release from perpetual slavery to Death, and bad luck.

Most of the four thousand chiefs and chieftains who had renounced the world with Risabha Deva and who had slunk away from *tapascharaṇa* now came back to Him and entered the *Saṅgha*.

After the departure of Bharata the Indra of the first Heaven stood up to chant the praises of the Lord. He composed an adoration in which he described the Holy One by one thousand and eight auspicious names.

The *devas*, then supplicated the WORLD TEACHER through their Leader, in the following words :—
 "O Master Divine, O Preserver of Souls; O Protector of Life, O Giver of Joy to all Living Beings! the *bhavyas* (those who possess the realizable potentiality in their nature) in other parts of the world are in need of Thine Discourse Divine. They are like parched crops, which wither without rain and are revived by it! Do Thou now proceed to enlighten them!"

A procession was formed at once, the Lord proceeding on His Divine mission, surrounded by

devas and men, in the midst of scenes of great enthusiasm and heavenly pomp, which the residents of heavens brought together to glorify the WORLD TEACHER.

CHAPTER IX

PEEPING INTO THE FUTURE

Bharata was never quite at ease in his mind about the wisdom of the step he had taken as regards the establishment of the Brāhmana class, since he knew that his Father, who could have done it as well, had not seen it fit to do so. One night he saw a number of dreams which alarmed him a bit, and he decided to question the WORLD TEACHER about their import. So he proceeded to Mount Kailāsa where Rishabha Deva was staying at the time, and after worshipping Him with reverence and devotion, related his dreams, and humbly sought their explanation from Him. He was told that his dreams bore reference to the next age (the *pañchama kāla*) which would be marked with much deterioration and misery.

The first dream was the sight of twenty-three lions roaming in a forest and then climbing up the summit, of a hill. The WORLD TEACHER interpreted it to mean that in the day of twenty-three out of the twenty-four Tirthamkaras, Jaina Saints would remain steadfast to their austere ideal, and prove worthy of saintship.

The second dream consisted in the sight of a lion followed by a number of deers. This signified that in the time of the last Tirthamkara all saints would not

be able to adhere to the high ideal of saintship, and there would arise many householders who would propagate and spread false doctrines and recommend 'easier' conduct.

In the third dream Bharata had seen a horse burdened with the load of an elephant, this meant that the Saints in the *pañchama kāla* would undertake vows beyond their capacity and endurance.

A number of goats were seen grazing on dry leaves in the fourth dream, which portended that people would generally abandon the principles of true piety and defile their vows in the *pañchama kāla* (the current age) !

In his fifth dream Bharata saw a monkey seated on an elephant in place of man ! The WORLD TEACHER explained it to mean that in the fifth 'age' kingship would pass out of the hands of true Kshatriya races and be enjoyed by those who would be as far away from true Kshatriya traditions as a monkey is from man !

In the sixth dream a swan was being attacked by a number of crows. Its significance was that the Jaina Saints would be persecuted by men of other creeds.

A gnome's dance constituted the seventh dream, and it foretold that people would begin to worship demons in the fifth *kāla*, in place of the true Divinity !

A tank full of water all round, but dry in the centre, was seen next, this meant that Religion would disappear from the Aryāvarta, and would spread in the surrounding countries, occupied by *Malekshas* !

A lustreless heap of gems covered over with dust was seen next. This signified that in the *pañchama kāla* saints would be unable to attain to the purity of *śukla dhyāna* (pure self-contemplation or meditation of the higher type) !

A dog feeding on sweetmeats and being worshipped by man was seen in the tenth dream. Its import was that low class persons would parade as worshipful man and would be actually worshipped by the people !

A bellowing young bull was seen next. This meant that people would generally enter the holy order in their youth in the fifth *kāla*, instead of in old age.

In the twelfth dream Bharata saw the Moon surrounded by nebulous matter. This meant that the saints would be unable to acquire even clairvoyance and telepathy in the *pañchama kāla* !

Two bullocks going together were seen next implying that the saints in the *pañchama kāla* would be unable to attain to the purity of conduct necessary to enable them to roam about singly !

The Sun covered over by clouds was seen next. It meant that no one would be able to attain to Omniscience in the *pañchama kāla*.

A dried-up tree that cast no shade was the subject of the next dream. Its significance was that in the *pañchama Kāla* the generality of men and women would abandon religion, and become irreligious !

The sixteenth and the last dream consisted in the sight of dried up old leaves, and meant that the power of even great medicines would deteriorate in the end !

As regards the wisdom of the establishment of the Brāhmana class, Bharata was told that his action was justified so far as regarded the requirements of his times, but that the class would be filled with conceit for its high birth, and Brāhmanas would take to eating meat in many cases and would become generally hostile to the true *Dharma* (Jainism) in the *pañchama kālā* !

We may be sure that Bharata was not quite pleased with the forebodings or with the step he had taken in creating the fourth, namely, the Brāhmana *varṇa*. He went back to his kingdom from the *Samavasaraṇa* of the WORLD TEACHER and began to enjoy the fruits of his previous good *karmas*, as the first great *chakravartī* king !

The *pañchama* (fifth) *kālā* (time) hence the period of time is the one that is actually current now. It is the period of deterioration, characterized by conditions of existence that would slowly become very painful and distressing. It commenced only 2460 years ago, and has still got 18540 years to run. There will be wars, famines and pestilences during this period, with the result that men will be halfstarved and will grow stunted in size, till at the end of the period they will be no more than one cubit in height, and twenty years in age.

All this will take place gradually, almost imperceptibly, and in some places there will even appear periodic signs of growth. The arresting of the downward movement will, however, be a temporary affair. The tendency generally everywhere will be for things to go from bad to worse. In respect of religion, Bhāratvarsa will become irreligious, and the *maleksha* countries lying round about it will become enlightened. This part of the prophecy is likely to be soon fulfilled. For Religion can only live in the land of intelligence, but Bhāratvarsa can only boast of about ten per cent of literacy today. And out of this small proportion of literate men and women the number of those who are really intellectual will be perhaps one in a thousand. It may be safely taken then that the intellectual centre of the world is shifting from India to foreign lands ! What is most likely to happen next is the discovery of the soul-nature by European and American peoples, which is likely to be made in the course of the current century, thus fulfilling the Jaina prophecy !

Throughout the *pañchama kāla*, however, Religion will continue to exist on our globe. The continuity of the *saṅgha* (community of the faithful) will be maintained right up to its very end. There will be at least one saint, one nun, one householder, and one pious female follower of the Lord Jinendra in the world.

When only three moments will be left in the running *kāla rājā* (kingship), *agni* (fire) and *dharma* (religion) will be destroyed, one after the other, in

the order mentioned ! The last king, who will be called Kalki,* will snatch away the food from the hand of the last Saint, and will be destroyed by *devas* for his extreme impiety. The Saint and the Nun will perform *sallekhanā* death, along with the householder and the pious lay lady. Fire will disappear, instantly and *dharma* will cease to exist in the next moment.

Thereafter the sixth *kāla*, likewise of 21,000 years, will supervene. It will be the worst of all. People will keep on deteriorating, and the suffering and misery will be intolerable. Cooking will be unknown; for there will be no fire ! People will take to raw meat, which they will bite off from living animals and even men. Law and order will be replaced by lawlessness and disorder. At the end of the sixth *kāla*, a great calamity will befall the world for forty-nine days there will

* Kalki also figures in Hinduism, but there he is an allegorical figure and in glaring contrast with Jainism. He is the destroyer of *dharma* and a wicked persecutor of the pious in the latter, but the establisher of the true *dharma* and the destroyer of its foes in the former ! This antagonism is, however, only apparent and caused by the employment of an artistic form of allegory which while professing outwardly to differ from the Jaina view in reality, implies no difference at all. For the Hindu Kalki is the destroyer of the soul's internal enemies-passions and appetites and the like-who will establish the Kingdom of God in the human Heart, while the Jaina Kalki will be an historical enemy of the Faith and of the followers of the Faith who will be a man of flesh and blood in the outer world !

rain down on it fire and ashes and burning cinders; hot winds will scorch up all the surface of the soil, and it will be ripped open to a great depth. All living nature will be destroyed, excepting those who are able to hide themselves in deep ravines and caves, or who are accorded protection by some beings of the superhuman type. Thus will end the sixth *kāla*. The catastrophe however, will not be universal all over the universe.

At the commencement of the new order of things in the next half-cycle of time, the *Utsarṣini* which is the reverse of the ascending ark, the course of events will be changed. It will be the period of prosperity, and increase and rise. The forty-nine days' destruction will be followed by a different and opposite kind of phenomena during a similar period of time. Cold winds will blow on the earth cooling things—'curds' 'milk' etc.—will rain down on its surface; the signs of destruction will disappear from its face! Those who have survived will emerge from their hiding places, and inhabit the earth once more. The first Tirthankara of the *Utsarṣini kāla* will appear at the end of 42000 years from its commencement. He will re-establish Religion in the world!

The above prophecy would seem to admit of a rational explanation. Let us suppose that two huge revolving bodies of contrary natures, but of the comet type are slowly approaching our world,

and would come the nearest to it at the end of the sixth *kāla* of the running half-cycle. Let us further suppose that the first one of these bodies to draw near to the earth will be the comet with a fiery nature, like that of the sun. Its approach will then be characterised by all the indications given in the prophecy — the deterioration of vegetation, the disappearance of fire, because of the lack of fuel, the blowing of hot winds, the showering down of hot cinders, burning dust and the like. The destroyer will remain in the vicinity of the earth for the space of 40 days, which will be full of calamity for all living nature. It will then depart and recede further away. The other comet with the nature of the Moon will then draw near, when there will occur the opposite kind of phenomena—the blowing of cold winds, the raining down of cooling thing, curds, milk, 'ambrosia', and the like! Humanity will now reappear on the surface of the earth, and will once more inhabit it. It will take them about 42,000 years to be restored to a state of civilization which will admit of the advent of a WORLD TEACHER to enlighten them on Religious Truth.

There is an alternative explanation which would also explain the dire prophecy. Let us suppose the Earth to run amok from some such cause as the depletion of its hidden strength—petrol, coal, and the like—or the order and regularity of the Solar System to be disturbed from some other

unknown cause, so that the Earth is brought scorchingly near to the Sun for the space of 49 days after which it tilts up in the other direction, and is drawn nearer to the Moon for a similar period of time. Then all the terrible phenomena are likely to occur as described in the prophecy.

As regards the snatching away of the morsel of food by the last king from the hand of the last Saint, its explanation may be sought in the fact that cooked food shall have become scarce long long before the end of the *pañchama kâla*. Perhaps the influence of the advancing fiery comet will be reinforced by the drying up of the stamina of the earth in consequence of the constant tapping to which it is being subjected, in one form and another, so that vegetation shall begin to dry up, fuel shall become scarce, and cooked food will become a rare delicacy many hundreds of years before the end of the age; the only living pious householder shall have procured the last bundle of chips to prepare the last meal for the Saint and the Nun! Law and order will have virtually disappeared long before this time, and the last king will probably be no more than a mere powerful bully. He will be attracted by the sight of the smoke from the householder's kitchen and will rush to help himself to cooked food, the greatest of delicacies at the time. He will arrive just in time to be able to snatch the first morsel from the hand of the Saint. The *devas*, who do not usually interfere in human affairs, will be unable to tolerate such an insult to Saint-

ship, and will take revenge on the king. In the next moment the little bundle of faggots shall have burnt itself out, and fire will become a thing of the past! *Dharma* (Religion), which cannot live except in the hearts of men, must likewise perish when those who cherish it and put it into practice are gone. This is probably how the king, fire and *dharma* (religion) shall be destroyed, one after another, in three successive moments of time, at the end of the current age (*kāla*) !

CHAPTER X

THE COMMUNITY OF THE FAITHFUL

Jainism marks a distinction between the higher and the lower orders of its followers. The community is divided into four classes, namely, Saints and laymen (termed house-holders) among males, and nuns and pious laity among females. The division is grounded on the principle that all men and women cannot be expected to come up, all at once, and without long and adequate previous training, to that high ideal of self-effacement that demands the selling off of all one is possessed of and its distribution in charity.

There were eighty four apostles of the WORLD TEACHER amongst them being Vrisabha Sen, Kachha Mahā Kachha, Nami and Vinami whom we have already met in this narrative. Jaya Vama was also one of the Apostles of the *Tirthamkara*.

There were no less than 20,000 Omniscient Saints who followed the Holy Tirthamkara. 12,700 saints were endowed with the subtler mental Perception, 9,000 with Clairvoyance; and 4,750 knew the entirety of the twelve departments of the Teaching of Truth! There were 20,600 Saints who enjoyed wonderful miraculous powers. Many other saints followed the Lord. Of this vast number by far the major portion attained *nirvāna*, the rest re-incarnating in the heavens.

Three hundred and fifty thousand nuns, headed by Brāhmi, followed the WORLD TEACHER. No less than three hundred thousand householders who were training themselves by the observance of vows and other forms of disciplinary processes worshipped the Lord. The number of the pious female followers was five hundred thousand, in round figures.

Some of the members of the animal kingdom who recollected their past lives followed the Lord, several of them even adopting the minor vows of the laity.

CHAPTER XI

NIRVANA.

When a fortnight remained in the life of the WORLD TEACHER the *Samavasarana* dispersed; and the Lord proceeded to accomplish the destruction of the remaining *karmic* forces of the non-inimical type that were still present in His Great Spirit. It was the last (*Purnamāsi*) day in the month of Pausa on which He seated Himself in the middle of the two summits Śrī Śikhara and Siddha Śikhara of the Mount Kailāsa, and applied Himself to pure Self-contemplation of the higher type. He sat in the sitting posture, facing the East.

On the night preceding the *Purnamāsi* day, Bharata and others had seen several portentous dreams, towards the end of the last watch, Bharata saw the huge Mountain Meru extending to the Place of the Perfect Ones. His son Arkakirti saw a huge Tree possessing medicinal properties moving up towards the heavens, after curing living beings of their ailments! The Chamberlain of the household of the Emperor, too, saw a dream, in which he saw a huge Wish-fulfilling Tree, capable of gratifying all kinds of wishes, rising up in the sky! Jaya Varmā's son, Ananta-veerya beheld the bright Moon ascending into the higher regions of the Sky, surrounded by a number of stars! Her Imperial Majesty Queen Subhadrā, the daughter-in-law of the WORLD TEACHER and the

favourite wife of the Emperor, saw the Indrāni (the Queen of the first Heaven) consoling Yaśasvati and Sunandā, the two co-wives of the Lord! The Prime Minister of Bharata saw a Jewel Island rising up in the sky; and Chitrangada, one of the sons of King Akampana, beheld the Sun vanishing into the sky with great lustre!

These dreams created a sensation in Ajudhya and Vārānasi. Bharata was still discussing them with his men when one Ananada brought the news of the *Samavasaraṇa*, and of the WORLD TEACHER'S applying Himself to the eradication of His remaining *karmas*. The Emperor immediately proceeded to the Mount Kailāsa on the aerial vehicles of his Vilyālhara feulatory kings, and there performed the worship known as the *Māhamaha* for a fortnight.

At last on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month of Māgha, at the time of sunrise, when the moon was passing out of the Abhijit (the tail of the Uttarāṣāḍha) constellation, the Lord resorted to the third form of the holy *Śhukla dhyāna* (self-contemplation), termed *sukshmakriyāpratīpāti* (literally having the slightest bodily tinge), and destroyed the three channels of the approach of matter, namely, the mind speech and the body! He immediately attained to the fourteenth and the last *guṇasthāna* (psychological station on the Path), from where adopting the last form of the holy self contemplation (*vyuprata kriyā-nivṛiti* signifying a cessation of all kinds of organic

activities), He passed into *nirvāna*, in the space of time required to articulate the five vowels a,e,u, ri and li! The next instant marked the appearance of another Perfect One to grace the Holy Land of the Abode of Gods in *nirvāna* at the top of the Universe!

The Perfect Souls that reach *Nirvāna* are free from birth, death, old age, disease, grief, pain, hunger, thirst and worry. They have no bodies, and do not sweat. Pure Spirits by nature, They enjoy uninterruptedly, and for ever, all those incomparably divine attributes and privileges which appertain to the simple substance of Their Being. It is impossible to enumerate all the virtues of even such common substances as silver and gold, and is equally impossible to count or describe all the wonderful properties of the Soul-substance! The *Siddhas* (Gods) enjoy Omniscience, Immortality and unthinkable, unsurpassed Bliss; They see and hear all, as if They were present everywhere! They have no loves and hatreds left in them, and do not grant boons to friends or show disfavour to foes. Their divine Example, Their Teachings and Their Footprints are left for those who, disgusted with the world, seek a way out of this Cannibal's (Death's) Cave! Those who walk in Their Footsteps become in all respects like Them as regards the innate Divinity of the Spirit substance, and speedily reach the Holy *Siddha Silā*, to sit by Them!

The first WORLD TEACHER of the current half-cycle of time, too, is now living in the *Siddha*

Sila, at the Top of the Universe, endowed with Immortality, Perpetual Youth, full All-embracing Knowledge, and Supreme Bliss ! He will never come back, or fall into transmigration again !

The *nirvāna* of a WORLD TEACHER is termed the fifth *kalyāṇaka* (auspicious event); and *devas* and men assemble to celebrate it. When Rishabha Deva attained *nirvāna*, *devas* flocked on the Mount Kālīāsa and celebrated the glorious Event in their usual manner. The bodies of the Perfect Ones are dispersed, like camphor, and only some hairs and nails are left behind. Indra collected the hairs and nails are left behind. Indra collected the hairs and nails of Rishabhadeva and created a body with his powers of illusion to resemble the Lord's. This body they cremated, and besmeared their own bodies with its ashes. Great rejoicings and dancings took place on the occasion, as is the custom of the *devas*.

Bharata was, however, very disconsolate, and plunged in grief. He did not participate in the rejoicings in which men joined the *devas*.

Ganadhara (Apostle) Vrisabha Sen saw him and spoke to him : "Surely, this is not an occasion for grief," said he, for the Lord has gone to the everlasting Abode of the Immortals, which you and I even are also going to reach very soon !" After a while Bharata recollected himself, and touching the Holy Feet of the Leader of Saints, proceeded to his kingdom. He lived for many years more in the world, but always filled with growing disgust for its toys

and joys. At last one day he discovered a white hair in his head and taking it to be the messenger and herald of old age, immediately decided to leave the world. He appointed Arkakirti to succeed him, and became a saint. The effect of his growing *vairāgya* (detachment) immediately manifested itself in the acquisition of the subtler mental perception; and he even destroyed his inimical *Karmas* within an *anta-ramahurta* (less than 48 minutes' time), attaining to omniscience, as the reward of his supreme sense of disgust for the world. He then moved about teaching and preaching the Noble Truth to the suffering humanity, and at last attained to the purity of Spiritual nature, that is *nirvāna* !

Bahūbali had already attained *Nirvana* from the Mount Kailāsa, and Vrisabha Sen, the Apostle, and the other Apostles and many of the Saints also attained *nirvāna* from different places on different dates. Those of the Holy Saints who did not reach *nirvāna* at once were reborn in heavens where also went the pious householder who followed the Lord Risabha Deva. The ladies of the *sangha* (community), too, re-incarnated in the heavens, according to their merit, and rid themselves of the female form ! Many of them have already reached *nirvāna* in the ages that have flown by since ! Others are bound to reach it for certain; for it is characteristic of the true *Dharma* (Religion) that whosoever is once moved by it, for howsoever fleeting a moment it might be, is sure to be attracted to the Right Path one day or another, and thus reach the GOAL of PERFECTION and JOY !

LAST WORD

Was Rishabha or Vrashbha an historical personage? This is the question which is generally answered in the negative, and Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of the Jainas, passed over as a shadowy person. The chief reason for this is the very remote antiquity of the founder of Jainism—His life time goes much anterior to that of Rama and Lakshmana, while the history of India has been assumed to begin with the 8th or 10th Century B. C. But how can this assumption be relied upon now, when the literary and epigraphical evidence is available to push back the beginning of the ancient history of India, not by decades but centuries. The Jaina and Buddhistic literature of the Mauryan period and the antiquities of Mohanjodaro and Harappa cannot be overlooked in this respect. ¹ Only the other day it was pointed out by Prof. Prau Nath of the Hindu University that a copper-plate belonging to the period of Babylonian dynasty mentions the name of Neminath, the 22nd Tirthankara, of the Jainas. ² This means that the real history of India and the beginning of Jainism go back much further than the 10th Century B. C.

Under the circumstances, sound scholarship demands the reviewing of the ancient traditions of the Puranas with greater respect and if we do that we shall find that we cannot be justified in passing by the great personality of Rishabha as a myth.

1. Mohan-jo-Daro. Vol. I pp 1-354.

2. Times of India, 19th March 1935.

In the Jain literature, the Agama (canonical) text of the Svetamber sect are regarded by certain scholars including Dr. Jacobi to belong to the Mauryan period.³ These clearly narrate⁴ the life of Rishabha, and name him as the first Tirthankara of the Jainas. Similarly, the available Agama (canonical) portion and the other texts of the first century B. C. of the Digambara sect mention this great Hero in the same way.⁵ Turning to the non-Jain evidence, our eyes naturally turn to the Vedic literature and we find mentioned in no less a work than the Rigveda itself the name of Rishabha;⁶ but some scholars reject this evidence and urge that there is nothing to show that he was a Jaina Tirthankara.⁷

3. Jaina Sutras, S. B. E. Introduction.

4. Acharanga Sutra (S. B. E.) Pt. Kalpa Sutra, (S. B. E.) p. 282-3 Samavayanga Sutra (Hyderabad ed.) pp. 97-194.

5. 'तिरथयरा चउबोस वि केवलयाणेण दिट्ठसव्वट्ठा ।'—जय-धवला महाधवला, प्रवचनसार, अष्टपाहुड आदि.

6. 'ऋषभं मासमानानां सपत्नां विषा सहि ।

हन्तारं शत्रूणां कृधि विराजं गोपितं गवाम् ॥'

—ऋग्वेद १०—१२—१६६

'Tr. O Rudra like Divinity' do thou produce amongst us, of high descent, a Great God, like Rishabha Deva, by becoming Arhan which is the epithet of the First World teacher, let Him become the destroyer of the enemies.

7. Historical Gleanings, page 76.

Sayana and other commentators of the Veda named, no doubt, establish the fact that Rishabha is the name of a person,⁸ but they too are not clear as to the identity of the person named. It may be clear that either they had no knowledge of who this Rishabha Deva was, or they did not wish to disclose his identity owing to religious animosity, which is responsible for many an alteration and addition in the Vedas.⁹ But the Hindu Puranas are found to be very helpful in settling the point; and they give one and all, the same story of Rishabhadeva as is found in the Jaina literature.¹⁰ Thus no reason

8. वैराजस्य शक्करस्य वा ऋषभास्यस्य"—“ऋषभ ऋषभवत् प्रशस्तं”

—सायण

“ऋषभोनाम । वैराजोऽयं शाक्करो वा ।”—सर्वानुक्रमणिका पृ० १६४

9. Pargiter, A. I. H. T., p. II and Asur India, Intro p. IV.

10. Cf. Jaina account of Rishabha given in Harivamsa Sarga 8 sls. 55-104 ff. with the following Quotations from the Hindu Puranas:—

हरिवंश पुराण सर्ग ८ श्लोक २२, १०४ व सर्ग ९ श्लोक २१

अग्नीध्र सूनोर्नाभस्तु ऋषभोऽभूत् सुतो द्विजः ।

ऋषभाद् भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रं शताद्वरः ॥२६॥

सोभि शिष्यर्षभः पुत्र महा प्रावाज्य मास्थितः ।

तपस्येते महाभागः पुलहाश्रम शंसयः ॥४०॥

हिमावहं दक्षिण वर्ष भरताय पिताददौ ।

तस्मात्तु भारतं वर्षं तस्य नाम्ना महारममः ॥४१॥

—मार्कण्डेय पुराण अध्याय ५० पृ० १५० ।

remains for not regarding of the Vedic text to refer to

हिमाव्हं तु यद्वर्षं नाभे रासीन्महारमनः ।

तस्यर्षभोऽभ्युत्थो मरु देव्या महा द्युतिः ॥३७॥

ऋषभाद् भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रः शताग्रजः ।

सोऽभिर्षिच्यर्षभाः पुत्रं भारतं पृथिवी पतिः ॥३८॥

—कूर्म पुराण अध्याय ४१ पृष्ठ ६१ ।

जरा मृत्यु भयं नास्ति धर्मो धर्मो युगादिकम् ।

नाधर्मं मध्यमं तुल्या हिमाद्रेशातु नाभितः ॥३९॥

ऋषभो मरु देव्या च ऋषभात् भरतो भवत् ।

ऋषभोदत्त श्री पुत्रे शाल्य ग्रामे हरिं गतः ॥४०॥

भरताद् भारतं वर्षं भरता सुमति स्वभूत् ॥४१॥

—अग्नि पुराण अध्याय १० पृष्ठ ६२ ।

नाभि स्व जनयत्पुत्रं मरु देव्यां महा द्युतिः ।

ऋषभं पार्थिवं श्रेष्ठं सर्वं सत्रस्य पूर्वजम् ॥४२॥

ऋषभाद् भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रः शताग्रजः ।

सोऽपिर्षिच्यप्य भरतः पुत्रं प्राब्राज्यमास्थितः ॥४३॥

हिमाव्हं दक्षिणं वर्षं भरतायन्य वेदयत् ।

तस्माद् भारतं वर्षं तस्य नास्ना विदुर्बुधाः ॥४४॥

—वायु महा पुराण पूर्वार्ध अध्याय ३३ पृष्ठ ५१ ।

नाभिस्त्वं जनयत्पुत्रं मरु देव्यां महा द्युतिम् ॥४५॥

ऋषभं पार्थिवं श्रेष्ठं सर्वं सत्रस्य पूर्वजम् ।

ऋषभाद् भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रः शताग्रजः ॥४६॥

सोऽभिर्षिच्यर्षभः पुत्रं महाप्राब्राज्य मस्थितः ।

हिमाव्हं दक्षिणं वर्षं तस्य नास्नाविदुर्बुधाः ॥४७॥

—ब्रह्माण्ड पुराण पूर्वार्धअनुपङ्ग पाद अध्याय १४ पृष्ठ २४ ।

नाभेर्मेरु देव्यां पुत्रमजनय ऋषभनामानं तस्य भरतो ।

पुत्रश्च तावदग्रजः तस्य भरतस्य पिता ऋषभः—

हेमाद्रेर्दक्षिणं वर्षं महद् भारतं नाम शशास ॥

—वाराह पुराण अध्याय ७४ पृष्ठ ४६ ।

Rishabha the first Tirathankar Jainism. Moreover, when the Vedic commentator insists on the elucidation of the Vedic tradition with the help of traditional history in the Epics and the Puranas, ¹¹ it

(अत्र नाभेः सर्गं कथयामि)

नाभेर्निसर्गं वक्ष्यामि हिमाकेस्मिन्नि बोधतः ।

नाभिस्त्वं जनयत्पुत्रं मेरु देव्यां महामतिः ॥१७॥

ऋषभं पार्थिवः श्रेष्ठं सर्वं ऋषस्य पूजितं ।

ऋषभाद् भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्र शताग्रजः ॥२०॥

सोऽभिषिच्यप्य ऋषभो भरतं पुत्र वत्सलः ।

ज्ञान वैराग्यमाश्रित्य जितेन्द्रिय महोरगान् ॥२१॥

सर्वैर्यत्न नारम निस्थाप्य परमात्मा नमोश्चरम् ।

नग्नो जटो निराहारो क्षीरी ध्वांत गतो हिसः ॥२२॥

निराशस्त्यक्त सदेहः शैबमाप परं पदम् ।

हिमाद्रे दक्षिणं वर्षं भरताय न्यवेदयत् ॥२३॥

तस्मात्तु भारतं वर्षं तस्य नाम्ना विदुर्बुधाः ।

— लिङ्ग पुराण अध्याय ४७ पृष्ठ ६८ ।

नते स्वस्ति युगावस्था क्षेत्रेष्वष्ट सुसर्वदा ।

हिमाद्रिस्थं तुवै वर्षं नाभेरासीन्महात्मनः ॥२७॥

तस्यर्षभो भवत्पुत्रो मेरु देव्यां महा द्युति ।

ऋषभाद्भरतो जज्ञे ज्येष्ठः पुत्र शतस्य सः ॥१८॥

— विष्णु पुराण द्वितीयांश अध्याय १ पृष्ठ ७७

वैकटेश्वर कृपा चम्बई का ।

नाभे पुत्रश्च ऋषभः ऋषभाद्भरतो भवत् ।

तस्य नाम्ना त्विहं वर्षं भारत चेति कीर्यते ॥५७॥

— स्कन्ध पुराण माहेश्वर खण्ड के कौमार खण्ड अध्याय २७ ।

is permissible to regard the Vedic Rishabha to be the son of the Patriarch Nabhi and his wife Marudevi and the founder of Jainism in this cycle of time, as is evident from the Hindu Bhagwat (2.7-10) itself. This agreement of the Jainas and the Brahmanical texts is so striking and singular that we cannot deny its validity.¹² Nor are wanting Vedic scholars, like Prof. Virupaksh Wadiyar, M. A., Veda Tir-tha,¹³ who clearly admit, that the Rishabha of the Rigveda hymn is the same as the first Tirthankara of the Jainas.

Likewise, the epigraphical evidence also bears testimony to the real personality of Rishabhadeva. Certain ancient seals from Mohen-jo-Daro finds may be referred to in this connection. Nudity, Posture of the body and the pose of the eyes of the figures engraved on them¹⁴ are the characterising elements and marks of the Jain images. Rai Bahadur Prof. Ramprasada Chanda M. A. remarks rightly about them, when he writes.

"Yoga or religious meditation is the common element of all historic Indian religions with the exception of Vedic ritualism.....The Kavotsraga (dedica-

12. Prof. Stevenson remarked that "It is so seldom that Jainas and Brahmanas agree, that I do not see how we can refuse them credit in this instance, where they do so."

Kalpasutra, Intro. XVI.

13. Jainas-Patha-Pradarshaka, III, 3. 106.

14. Marshall, Mohen-Jo-Daro (London 1931.) Vol. I pp. 52-78.

tion of the body) posture is peculiarly Jaina. It is a posture not of sitting, but of standing. In the *Adipurana* (XVIII) *Kayotsarga* posture is described in connection with the penances of *Rishabha* or *Vrishabha* the first Jina of the Jainas...Not only the seated deities engraved on some of the Indus seals are in Yoga in the Indus valley in that remote age, the standing deities on the seals also show *Kayotsarga* posture of Yoga described above.....A standing image of Jina *Rishabha* is in *Kayotsarga* posture on a stèle.....in the Curzon Museum Mathura ..It will be seen that the post of this image closely resembles the post of the standing deities on the Indus seals.....The name *Rishabha* means bull and the bull is the emblem of Jina *Rishabha*. The Standing deity figured on seals 3 to 5 may be the proto-type of *Rishabha*.¹⁵

There is not only the resemblance of the Jaina image of *Rishabha* the first Jina, with the figures on Indus seals, but a certain Indus seal (No. 449) bears an inscription, which Prof. Pran Nath reads as *Jinesh-wara*.¹⁶ This is sufficient to prove the authenticity of the Jaina tradition about the antiquity of *Rishabha-deva*.

Further more the ancient *Hathi Gupha* inscription of King *Kharvela* mentions clearly an image of *Agra Jain* (i. e., the first Jain; i. e., *Rishabha*) which was

15. *Modern Review*. August 1932, pp. 156-159

16. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Supplement, Vo VIII
2 No;

a national asset of the Kalinga people and was taken away to Magadha by a Nanda King.¹⁷ This shows that the tradition of Rishabhadeva is more ancient than the Nanda period.¹⁸ The religious votaries of the times of Buddha and Mahavira, no doubt, regarded Rishabha as a real person and worshipped his images.

Again the images of Jaina deities, bearing inscriptions dedicated to Rishabva in the Curzon Museum Muttra also prove this very thing.¹⁹ There were images of Jinas engraved on the plane of a Stupa which was regarded, in the Indo-Scythian period to be the work of Devas, which Profs. Bulher and Smith assigned to the time of Parsvanatha, i. e., 8th. Century B. C.²⁰ This evidence pushes back the Jaina tradition of 24 Tirthankaras including Rishabhadeva far anterior to the Nanda Kings and Mahabira's time.

Now, if Rishabha was not a real personage there is no reason to believe that the people of ancient India should make and worship his images and dedicate inscriptions to him.

We, therefore, regard Rishabha as a real personage and founder of Jainism in this cycle of time.

17. Journal of the Behar and Orissa Res: Society, Vol. III pp. 465-467.

18. MM. K. P. Jayaswal remarks; "Before the time of Kharvela there were temples of Arhats on the Udyagiri Hills., JBORS III. p. 47.

19. The Jaina stupa and other antiquities of Muttra.

20. Ibid.

ADORATION

Lord Rīṣabha, Source of Wisdom, Revealer of truth !
Divinity Incarnate, Perfection of the Divine in Man !
Endowed with Innate Greatness, invested with
Perfections Innumerable !

God of *devas*, God of gods !
Lord, Master, Protector of Living Beings !
Destroyer of Ignorance, Conqueror of Death !
By nature Intelligence, all-knowing Thou !
Consciousness Thy function, all-perceiving Thou !
Joy Thine attribute, all-happiness Thou !
In power irresistible, all-powerful Thou !
The 'First-formed Father,' Teacher Divine !
The Founder of *dharma*, thrice Worshipful Thou !
Revealer of the Path, Well-wisher of all !
Effulgence of Pure Spirit, Independent, Free !
Immortal, Fearless, Immutable, Immaculate !
With nothing left to accomplish, ever at Rest !
Guide, Master, Friend, the Best of the best !
Thou grantest no boons, yet men get the best of
gifts by worshipping Thee !
All troubles are ended by the mention of Thine
Holy name !

Afflictions fly away from Thy devotees in no time !
They who even salute Thine Statue's Feet
Obtain what none else can grant under the Sun—
The Gift of Life Eternal, Joy Inexhaustible,
Knowledge Infinite !

Whosoever cometh to lay his needs before Thee
Himself becometh the Source of all Goodness and Good !
Grant, that is, let Thine adoration grant,
That the whole World should follow thee
Truth thou taughtest in the Hoariest Past !

Amen !

